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July 10, 2015

Chairman Jason Chaffetz and Ranking Member Elijah E. Cummings
House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
2157 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Chaffetz and Ranking Member Cummings,

The tragedy on June 17 in Charleston, SC shook the entire nation. The shooting of nine Americans within the sanctuary of a church made us all wonder where anyone can escape the threat of gun violence.

Congress passed the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act in 1993 to address the threat of unrestrained gun violence, and ensure that dangerous individuals do not have access to firearms. Yet in the over 20 years since, it has become clear that the background check system put in place by this law remains inadequate. In the case of the Charleston shooting, FBI Director James B. Comey announced on July 10 that a felony charge against Dylann Roof was not properly entered into the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS). Had the system worked properly, Roof would not have been able to purchase a handgun, and nine innocent lives may have been spared.

In the face of this overwhelming and tragic evidence of dangerous loopholes in the NICS database, Congress must step forward to examine its record and evaluate proposals to improve these background checks. Without a fully-functioning criminal background check system, more felons and other dangerous individuals may obtain guns.

I urge the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform to hold a hearing on this most recent lapse in the NICS database, as well as proposals to improve this system so that we can better protect our communities from gun violence.

I hope you will consider this request, and please do not hesitate to reach out if I can help in any way to convene this important hearing.

Sincerely,

CAROLYN B. MALONEY
Member of Congress